

Appendix One

Communities Together Network (CTN) 2015/16 Annual Report to Community Leadership Committee 7th September

1. Introduction

This report is the second annual report on the Communities Together Network (CTN). The CTN is a borough-wide network of local partners, community and faith organisations and businesses which come together to discuss issues that are important to local residents.

This annual report tells the story of our year; it covers how the CTN's aims and purpose have been broadened in 2016 and outlines the subsequent changes in structure and membership. The report also provides examples of how CTN strives to drive change by encouraging good relations between Barnet's diverse Communities, and different areas within the council. Finally, the report looks at next steps for CTN and provides links to equalities and community cohesion data.

2. Background: Why CTN was established

CTN was set up as a borough-wide forum to support community cohesion and resilience so that, as Barnet grows and changes, relationships between our diverse communities remain strong.

Working alongside the Community Participation Strategy and The All Party Political Group Covenant on Faith Action, CTN helps Barnet to build strong community links and partnerships and foster excellent community relationships and community spirit. CTN is designed to operate at a proactive and reactive level in response to any emergency incidents, so that emergency services and the community can work together

In particular, CTN forms part of the council's response to the third aim of General Public Sector Equalities Duty PSED (set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) - to foster good relations between people from different groups. CTN promotes community cohesion through providing a space to develop good relationships and by monitoring, understanding, reducing and preventing any community tensions.

CTN was formally established by Cabinet decision in October 2013 and linked to the Council's broader approach to equalities as set out in the Equalities Policy January 2014. Cabinet agreed that CTN would provide an annual report to Community Leadership Committee. The Network is co-chaired by Barnet Council and CommUnity Barnet, with support provided by Barnet's strategic lead for Community Participation and the Equalities lead.

3. Our expanding remit in 2016

The 1st Annual CTN Report detailed the intention to review the work of the CTN. The review took place during October 2015 - December 2015. The review was held as a result of the evolving needs of the council and local communities. These included:

- Feedback from community groups on the need for a Borough strategic forum with the voluntary, community and faith sector;
- Changes in voluntary sector funding;
- The council's Corporate Plan 2016 -2020;
- Implementation of the Council's Community Participation Strategy; and
- The adoption in November 2015 of the All Party Political Group Covenant on Faith Action for the implementation of a strategic partnership with the Barnet Multi Faith Forum (BMFF)¹.

The review sought feedback from the membership on the operation of CTN and suggestions for change. These were considered at the CTN Steering Group meeting in December 2015. The Steering Group made proposals on the future operation of CTN, together with proposed changes to CTN Terms of Reference. Further consultation on the draft proposals and Terms of Reference took place at the March 2016 open forum meeting.

CTN maintains a community cohesion focus and also aims to be more inclusive and sustainable by encouraging greater participation of the voluntary, community and faith sectors together with the business sector, public sector and resilience partners.

CTN continues to build an understanding of what really matters to Barnet's communities and share information so that Barnet's diverse communities feel informed, included and safe. It also facilitates joint working in the borough, fostering the potential for people to take on more responsibility for their local areas and deliver better outcomes for residents and communities in the years ahead.

The refreshed Communities Together Network operates at three levels:

- CTN Steering Group: a core membership of strategic partners which will meet annually to review how CTN operates and set the strategic direction of the future work plan.
- CTN Open Forum: an open forum to facilitate joint working and networking.
- Emergency Response: an emergency response function linked to the Borough Resilience Forum.

4. Refreshed CTN Terms of Reference and Meeting Format

To reflect its broader purpose, CTN terms of reference were refreshed in consultation with Borough partners and VCS and faith sectors and adopted at the open meeting in March 2016 as follows:

¹ This recognised BMFF as the borough strategic partner for faith and identified CTN as the principal vehicle for engagement with them. The covenant was approved by Community Leadership Committee and Full Council and was signed by the Mayor in November 2015 in recognition of this strategic arrangement.

- To promote community wellbeing and encourage cohesive and safe communities by sharing information and talking about what matters to communities and residents
- To operate at a proactive and reactive level in response to emergency incidents, so that emergency services and the voluntary, faith and community sector can work together to monitor, understand, reduce and prevent community tension
- To allow Borough strategic partners to have early sight of strategic issues affecting the voluntary, faith and community sector
- To facilitate and promote joint working between the voluntary, faith and community sector and the statutory and business sector
- To act as a consultative forum to discuss, identify and raise issues of concern

The diagram below shows the model of CTN engagement. The CTN steering group will meet annually in December to review CTN operation and plan the programme of work for three open meetings each year which will follow a standard format. Smaller emergency meetings will be convened as necessary selecting representatives from all parts of the membership as necessary, according to the particular circumstances.

Communities Together Network



The illustrated agenda below shows how CTN now operates as a broader strategic forum, by showcasing best practice in the voluntary sector, providing an opportunity for participants to raise any burning issues and, where the Council and other public sector partners can seek input into some of the major decisions which impact on the borough. For example, the June 2016 meeting was attended by officers leading on the Family Friendly Barnet Strategy.

Standard Items

Welcome, news and quiz	
Item on community safety, resilience and prevention	An opportunity to present safety, resilience and prevention challenges and identify cross-cutting themes
Project Showcase	An opportunity for local services to showcase their initiatives to other groups and decision-makers
Item on strategic and commissioning updates	An opportunity for the Council or CCG to provide information on upcoming strategic priorities
Item on representation	An opportunity for the voluntary, faith and community organisations to provide input to decision-makers
Open session	An opportunity for participants to pitch a session and for attendees to break into working groups to discuss 'burning issues'.
Thank you, evaluation and close	

A key CTN objective is to share information and talk about what matters to communities so that CTN members feel informed and can influence relevant decision making processes. For example, at the open meetings, officers can make a brief presentation and promote the consultation exercise where the Council is developing key strategies which link to the theme of CTN meeting, This has been done at open meetings in relation to Children's and Young People Plan, Adults Alternative Delivery model and the Libraries Strategy.

Outside the open meetings other opportunities for CTN membership to get involved in consultation, strategies and events are brought to the attention of the membership through regular e mail contact. For example VCS have been informed of focus groups on, for example, Shisha campaign, West Hendon Fun Day, opportunities for involvement with Barnet Multi Faith Festival and the Borough's celebration of Silver Sunday for over 55's. Commissioning and Strategy leads are also encouraged to involve the network in strategy development and the Sports and Physical activity strategy have involved faith contacts to feed into cultural and religious needs into that strategy.

5. CTN Membership

CTN membership remains open to all Voluntary, Charity, Faith, Education and Business sector organisations in Barnet in partnership with council officers and the borough strategic partners (police fire and health). Councillors are also welcome to attend and to refer issues to CTN.

CTN membership has developed from the list of organisations who first came together in 2011 to respond to the civil disturbances. In May 2013 CTN membership developed further in response to the arson attack at Coppetts Road Community Centre (which was home to Somali Bravanese Welfare Association) when multi faith community relationships became an important element in community cohesion.

The Network is keen to involve all our diverse faith communities and are working together (and with BMFF) to promote wider involvement in CTN from Barnet's Muslim communities.

In line with the new CTN Terms of Reference, there has been a drive to improve VCS engagement and attendance at the open meetings. CTN membership list currently includes approx. 230 individuals from approx. 170 organisations (including 160 from Voluntary, Charity and Faith Sectors).

The table below illustrates the membership to different elements of the of the CTN function.

	CTN Steering Group	CTN Open Forum	CTN Emergency Response
Membershi p	Director of Strategy, LBB Children & Young People, LBB Adults & Social Care, LBB Community Engagement Equalities, LBB Resilience and emergency planning, LBB Community Safety, LBB CommUnity Barnet Groundwork Barnet Multi-Faith Forum Barnet Homes RE: Barnet Police London Fire Brigade CCG Barnet and Southgate College Middlesex University Department of Work & Pensions Cllr Longstaff, Chair of CLC Cllr Barry Rawlings	Steering Group Open invite to all voluntary, faith and community groups operating within Barnet	As required by the Borough Resilience Forum, but usually via e-mail correspondence

6. 2016 Open meetings

Invitations to attend the new themed open network meetings are now sent out on social media (Eventbrite). Between October 2013 and June 2015 VCS and Faith attendance at CTN averaged 4 organisations at each meeting. There is evidence that VCS engagement and attendance have increased in 2016. Details of the open network meetings held in 2016 are given in the table below:

Date	Venue	Theme	Agenda	Attendees
22.03.16	The Greek Community Centre	Adults and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future of the Communities Together Network, LBB Project Showcase: HomeShare Barnet Project Showcase: Ague Barnet's Inter-generational programmes Barnet Integrated Locality Team (BILT): Pilot feedback and next steps Open Session 	28
22.06.16	Hendon Town Hall	Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of young people in building community resilience, LBB Project Showcase: The Young Barnet Foundation Consultation: Family Friendly Barnet An Introduction to Local and National Data and Insight 	27
22.09.22	TBC	Regeneration	TBC	TBC

The March CTN open forum was attended by 28 individual and the breakdown between VCS and the public sector was nearly equal. In June, there was a decrease in the number of VCS sector organisations present, but an increase in the number and variety of strategic partners.

Sector	March	June
VCS	14	9
London Borough of Barnet	10	10
MPS	1	1
London Fire Brigade	0	1

Education	1	1
Barnet Homes	1	2
Business	0	1
Capita	0	1
Total	28	27

After the March CTN open forum attendees were asked to complete feedback forms. Ten out of the 28 attendees completed the evaluation form. The results of the feedback are summarised below:

- All 10 attendees reported that they would recommend the CTN to colleagues or other VCS organisations
- 5 attendees reported that the meeting was useful, whilst a further 5 reported that it was very useful

Initial feedback at two open sessions in 2016 indicates a positive VCS and strategic partner reception to the changes; that the format allows more participation and dialogue and it is more relevant to the voluntary, community and faith sectors. A number of attendees reported that they liked the pace of the presentations: “Short and informative. Good to see a combination of service providers”. Others also highlighted that they liked the networking opportunities and the interactive nature of the event. Further feedback was also received after the June event highlighting the positive aspects of a themed approach, enabling individuals to prioritise and ensure the right people were at the event and enabling a variety of VCS organisations to showcase their work.

Areas where attendees reported room for improvement included the number of VCS organisations present and having clearer aims and objectives.

As a result of the feedback and the information highlighted in the breakdown of attendees, work to diversify and increase CTN membership will remain a key objective going forward. Action is continuing to promote CTN to VCS and to encourage and diversify VCS attendance. For example, prior to each themed agenda officer practice is to identify and target relevant VCS groups with an interest in the specific agenda topic and make direct contact with them. This helps to grow CTN membership, improve VCS attendance and strengthen the sustainability of CTN. In addition VCS organisations listed on Barnet data base of VCS organisations (which is expected to be available from late September 2016) will be encouraged to sign up to CTN.

An information leaflet was also produced for the June meeting which stated the aims and objectives for the CTN open forum, and was distributed with the agenda for the day.

7. Responding to emergency issues

There has been little change to the CTN Reactive/Emergency Response Function. In any incident, the CTN responds alongside the Barnet Resilience Forum. CTN works as the community arm of the Barnet Resilience Forum to provide a communication link, monitor, understand, and reduce any community tension and may also on request, circulate information from strategic partners such as the Metropolitan Police or the Borough Resilience Forum.

The current *threat* level (since August 2014) for international terrorism attack in the *UK* is SEVERE. Two emergency response sessions of CTN were organised in November 2015 and January 2016 in response to terrorist attacks in Paris. According to the CTN Terms of Reference representation was sought from the steering group and Voluntary, Faith and Community sectors.as appropriate.

Seven emergency communications have been sent out to the CTN as follows:

Date	Incident	Message
November 2015	Terrorist attack in Paris	Condemnation of the attack
December 2015	Attack on North Finchley Mosque	Condemnation of the attack
January 2016	Terrorist attack in Paris	Condemnation of the attack
March 2016	Terrorist Attack in Brussels	Condemnation of the attack
July 2016	Terrorist Attack in Nice	Condemnation of the attack
July 2016	Murder of Father Jacques Hamel	Condemnation of the murder and information for security funding available to places of worship
July 2016	N/A	Communication of the Council resolution condemning hate crime to underline the borough's commitment to oppose all forms of religious hatred, intolerance and Hate Crime

8. Measuring social cohesion and good relations between Barnet's diverse communities

Barnet is a growing and diverse borough. Demographic data about Barnet can be found in Barnet's Equalities and Cohesion data summary and links are available at Appendix 2 to this paper.

Barnet's strategic equalities objective measures perceptions about community cohesion through analysis of the Residents' Perception Survey (RPS). The Spring 2016 RPS shows that satisfaction with Barnet remains high - 89% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (1 percentage point improvement from Spring 2015). This is 6 percentage points above the national average.

We are proud of our cohesive communities. A large majority (85%) of residents agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in Barnet (an improvement of one percentage point from 84% in Spring 2015). 81% of residents feel there is not a problem or not a very big problem with people not treating each other with respect and consideration (an improvement of 2 percentage points from 79% in Spring 2015).

Feeling safe and included are important features of a cohesive community and RPS data suggests that the majority of people in Barnet feel safe in their local area: 94% of residents reported that they feel safe in their local community during the day (Spring 2015 most recent data); and 73% of residents feel safe in their local area after dark (Spring 2016 – an improvement of 2 percentage points from 71% in Spring 2015).

9. Collaboration between Council Teams

During the CTN review it was noted that there was potential for more joint working between the teams involved with CTN - Community Participation and Equalities who support CTN, Community Safety and Emergency Planning. To be successful CTN must work across these teams to be kept informed of any issues anticipated by those teams which could have a bearing on community tension and also to feedback to them and strategic partners as necessary.

A regular meeting has been set up between these four council teams to establish close working relationships, discuss items of common interest, share information, and plan coordinated action. For example, this joint working approach has led to the current implementation of a complementary approach to engaging Barnet's Muslim communities, who are under-represented on CTN.

Emergency Planning and Community Safety teams have an opportunity on each CTN open meeting to link their area of specialism to the themed agenda. Both teams are also engaged in the CTN emergency response and can request emergency communication to the CTN network from other Borough partners. All four teams are members of Borough Resilience Forum.

10. CTN support for the Barnet Multi Faith Forum - Celebrating Our Differences

To celebrate cultural diversity and to demonstrate what can be achieved when diverse religious groups in the borough work together in harmony, peace and understanding, the Barnet Multi Faith Forum (BMFF) are planning and organising 'Celebration Barnet', the Barnet Unity of Faiths Festival.

The Barnet Unity of Faiths Festival will have at its heart music, drama, dance, sport, food, entertainment, exhibitions and discussions all aimed to promote the excellent cohesive nature and character of the Borough. The event will celebrate different groups in the borough and the rich diversity of cultural and religious traditions and beliefs to build trust and community cohesion by working together. The Festival aims to attract all ages, abilities, genders and those of faith and of none.

BMFF are working with a multi-agency partnership that brings together the Council, Capita, CommUnity Barnet, Groundwork and the voluntary sector, Public Health Barnet, The Unity of Faiths Foundation, The Emergency Services, Saracens (other sports organisations) and the business sector.

To date they have attracted Big Lottery funding and Barnet Council corporate grant support of £15,000 in total. A fundraising event for the business sector is being held on 7th September 2016 at Allianz Park and the festival will be held on 29th May 2017.

11. Next Steps for CTN

At the December 2016 meeting, CTN Steering Group will have an opportunity to review how the refreshed CTN has operated over the past year and how CTN activities are meeting the refreshed terms of reference. Areas for potential discussion and improvement could include;

- How to better involve local businesses
- How to increase membership of the VCS
- How to increase membership of faith leaders

The Steering Group will also set a future work plan, which will identify community issues and how CTN can share practical solutions and be involved in delivering the priorities of Barnet's Corporate Plan.